

Common Montana Rule Questions:

As you know, there is a lot more freedom for AmeriCorps members to do indirect service/capacity building activities. But there doesn't appear to be any kind of limitation, in terms of time, on those activities. I've potential programs who would like to do capacity-building activities exclusively. Is there an expectation on the part of CNCS that a certain percentage of member activities will remain focused on direct service? Is there a competitive advantage either way to the percentage of direct vs. indirect activities in the CNCS grants review process?

There are two areas of capacity building that require a percentage §2520.45 deals with fundraising this percentage is 10%, §2520.50 addresses hours that may be spent in education and training activities this percentage is 20%. There are no other percentages that apply to a specific activity, thus, it is correct that theoretically a grant application could be 100% capacity building. There is no competitive edge one way or the other. All grant application will be scored based on the application criteria.

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers: is this just more talk or are they seriously going to monitor this. If so, how will it be monitored and supported? This question stems from the majority of our partners not too excited about the volunteer recruitment portion of our program. If we are going to be asked to push this more, then how will we be supported in getting the message to our communities?

Yes, this is a serious component of the grant application and not just more talk. It will be monitored, managed, and reviewed through the WBR system, as well as direct communication with the state commissions. One additional question might be, "is there a timeline that we will be required to follow, in other words, for example: in Quarter 1 we should have 20% of these hours completed, the answer to that is no. However, if a Program Officer were to analyze what had been completed the first half of the program and the PPR shows no volunteer hours have been recorded the program officer will ask the Commission what is the program's plan to complete these hours. This will be a competitive factor in having the application make the competition. Keep in mind that Program Design counts for 50% of the scoring for the competition.

<http://nationalserviceresources.org/> is your starting place to learn more about successful volunteer Recruitment and Management/support.

Member Fundraising: Please confirm the need to record time spent fundraising on Member timesheets.

Yes, no more 10% of a members agreed upon time can be applied fundraising. § 2520.45

Performance Measures: Why was the PM requirement for Volunteer R&M removed when earlier language indicates a stronger emphasis on this requirement?

§ 2520.35 indicates that your program must involve recruiting or supporting volunteers. True, there is no PM requirement, only that each program have aligned PMs for one primary area or significant activity area. However, programs may submit additional relevant measures of the performance in other issue areas. Volunteer Recruitment can be one of those areas. Keep in mind that it is very possible that the commission have the option to require that PMs be presented for the Volunteer R&M.

There is talk of a nation-wide standard Volunteer R&M Perf. Measure being developed. When will this happen? Is this why coming up with our own is no longer required?

There is no section of the rules that indicate that there must be a PM for Volunteer R&M, although a program is free to make the Volunteer R&M the primary area or significant area of activity, and if so

would need to have a PM for that given Volunteer R&M. Also it is not mandatory on behalf of CNCS that each program only do one PM, the program at it's own election can do more than one aligned PM. There may be some commissions that will require more than one PM that this is beyond the control of CNCS.

One set of aligned measures: is the end outcome expected to occur within one year or by the end of year three? More info on this subject will be helpful in clarifying their expectation.

§2522.620

Aligned measures are one output, one intermediate –outcome, and one end-outcome.

At a minimum, you are required to report on outputs at the end of year one; outputs and intermediate-outcomes at the end of year two; and outputs, intermediate-outcomes and end-outcomes at the end of year three.

The end outcome is at the end of the 3rd year however each year the Program Officer will be examining the accuracy of the projected end-outcomes to see if PMs are on target.

This link to the National Services web page is a great starting point to help you in better understanding Performance Measures.

<http://epicenter.nationalserviceresources.org>

Corrective Action Plan & Amendment: 30 day limit for pre-determining inability to meet a PM could be difficult to meet. What flexibility do we have to challenge this based on individual circumstances? How will this be monitored (there's no history of this kind of monitoring in the past)? Loss of funding as a result? Please discuss more on this topic.

Actually after you, the commission, or Program Officer have determined that there appears to be a deficiency with the PMs then you have 30 days to submit the plan or request, then within the plan or request, the timeline in which you plan to achieve getting back on track will be determined. Once this is approved then if there is significant under-performance related to the plan that was submitted by the program and approved by your Program Officer, then corrective action can take place. Corrective action plans are outlined in §2522.650 a.1-5 of the code: Reduce the amount of Grant; suspend or terminate the grant; Use this information to access any application from your organization for a new AmeriCorps grant or a new grant under another program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service; amend the terms of any grant from CNCS to your organization; take other actions as deemed appropriate.

Evaluation Plan Summary with 1st re-compete and completed evaluation with 2nd re-compete—does this apply to all programs or just those over \$500,000?

For the formulas program the State commission will establish and enforce evaluation requirements as they deem appropriate.

State Competitive or Direct Corporation AmeriCorps Grantee (other than an Education Award Program) over \$500,000 will need to conduct an independent evaluation those under an internal more information can be found in §2522.710.

What is meant by “Budget Adequacy” and “Cost Effectiveness”? How will these be determined/monitored? Are there examples that can be shared that demonstrate why a submitted budget would be considered successful in these two categories?

The terms Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness are subcategories of one of the 4 categories that the Corporation uses as the basic criteria in selecting the grant.

Cost effectiveness increased to 25% from 15% last year. Cost Effectiveness accounts for 15% of the 25% that is allocated to the selection criteria, Budget Adequacy is at 10%

Cost effectiveness considers:

Corporation cost of MSY, as defined in §2522.485; an

Other indicators of cost effectiveness such as:

The extent to which the program demonstrates diverse non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;

For the current grantee, the extent to which you are increasing your share of cost to meet or exceed programs goals; or

For the current grantee, the extent to which you are proposing deeper impact or broader reach without a commensurate increase in Federal cost; (Find this in §2522.435)

Budget adequacy – 10%

Program age, or the extent to which your program brings on new sites;

Whether your program or project is located in a resource-poor community, such as rural or remote community, a community with high poverty, or a community with a scarcity of corporate or philanthropic resources;

Whether your program or project is located in a high-cost, economically distressed community, measured by applying appropriate Federal and State data; and

Whether the reasonable and necessary cost of your program or project are higher because they are associated with engaging or serving difficult-to-reach populations, or achieving greater program impact as evidenced through performance measures and program evaluation.

So when does the counting start on the years for the match criteria? For instance is MCC in year 10 because we have had funding since 1994, or are we in year 4 which would begin the counting after the 3 year cycle of grants funds ending in 2006.

§2521.60 2.d.schedule for current program grants. If you have completed at least one three year grant cycle on the date

this regulation takes effect, you will be required to provide your share of costs beginning at the year three level in the 1st

*program year in your grant following the regulations effective date and increasing each year after that. Thus 2006 is 26%
year 4.*